

WASHINGTON – Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) is seeking expedited consideration of a federal disaster declaration request made on behalf of Alabama farmers affected by a severe drought.

Bachus wrote to U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Michael Johanns urging a rapid review of a request for drought assistance submitted by the state. Governor Bob Riley has requested a federal disaster declaration for 19 counties, including Jefferson, Shelby, and St. Clair counties in the 6th District, where a drought emergency exists.

Another 46 counties are under a drought warning.

“The drought conditions are causing a hardship for farmers, and there doesn’t appear to be much relief in sight. Disaster assistance will help many farmers make it through this difficult season,” Bachus

said in the letter.

According to the state's Office of Water Resources, the majority of the state is experiencing severe to extreme drought conditions as a result of minimal rainfall, low stream flows, and depleted reservoir levels.

It is believed to be one of the driest starts to a year in Alabama in more than a century.

A formal damage assessment of

crop and livestock losses is conducted to determine eligibility for federal disaster assistance.